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LETTER DATED 20 FEBRUARY 1998 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I should like to call the attention of the members of the Security Council to the attached statement of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on the humanitarian impact of sanctions. The Committee, established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991, includes representatives of United Nations organizations and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations active in humanitarian assistance operations.

I believe that the statement will contribute to the deliberations of the Council and hope that members of the Council will give full consideration to the various issues raised therein.

(Signed) Kofi A. ANNAN

98-04086 (E) 230298

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Annex

Statement dated 29 December 1997 by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee to the Security Council on the humanitarian impact of sanctions

1. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee notes that sanctions have been resorted to by the Security Council and other authorities for the purpose of maintaining international peace and security. The Committee expresses its concern with respect to the humanitarian impact of such measures and strongly believes that adverse humanitarian consequences on civilian populations should be avoided. The design of a sanctions regime should therefore take fully into account international human rights instruments and humanitarian standards established by the Geneva Conventions.

2. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee considers that the Security Council and other sanctions authorities would benefit from comprehensive information and objective analysis of the potential humanitarian impact of sanctions when deciding on the imposition of sanctions. They would also benefit from information on the evolution of the humanitarian requirements under a sanctions regime on a regular basis. The Committee expresses its readiness to support the Emergency Relief Coordinator in making such information and analysis available to the Security Council. To that end, the Committee has established an inter-agency technical group, drawing on the expertise within the office of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, as well as United Nations agencies and other humanitarian organizations, to further elaborate indicators to assess and monitor the humanitarian impact of sanctions.

3. Furthermore, the Committee reaffirms its view that sanctions should not impede the work of humanitarian organizations in providing humanitarian assistance to the civilian population in the targeted countries. It welcomes the efforts of the Security Council to ensure that humanitarian exemptions are included in sanctions regimes. It suggests that these exemptions and the exemptions procedures should be reviewed regularly and adjusted in the light of the humanitarian requirements under the sanctions regime.

4. The Inter-Agency standing Committee supports the Emergency Relief Coordinator in undertaking consultations with the Security Council on the assessments of the humanitarian impact of sanctions, as well as on exemptions procedures to ensure the timely provision of humanitarian assistance to people in need.